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TAGS: TPHY, OTRA, KSCA, WMO, SZ

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF WMO CONGRESS XIII

REF. STATE CBL GENEVA 3703

1. SUMMARY

CLIMATE MAY BE CHANGING, BUT NOT THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION (WMO) WHICH HELD ITS 13TH QUADRENNIAL CONGRESS IN GENEVA FROM MAY 4-26, 1999. THE CONGRESS RE-ELECTED DR. JOHN ZILLMAN (AUSTRALIA) AS PRESIDENT AND RE-APPOINTED PROF G.O.P. OBASI (NIGERIA) AS SECRETARY-GENERAL. SEC-GEN OBASI WILL SERVE A 5TH FOUR-YEAR TERM, BUT CONGRESS APPROVED A RESOLUTION LIMITING ANY FUTURE APPOINTMENT TO A TOTAL OF THREE TERMS BEGINNING FROM THE NEXT CONGRESS. THE CONGRESS APPROVED A RESOLUTION FOR HYDROLOGICAL DATA EXCHANGE, SIMILAR TO THE ONE APPROVED FOUR YEARS AGO FOR METEOROLOGICAL DATA EXCHANGE. THE WMO ADOPTED A FOUR-YEAR ZERO NOMINAL GROWTH PROGRAM AND BUDGET OF SWISSFRANC 248.8M. FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES ARE REPORTED IN SEPTEL.

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2. OPENING

THE 13TH WMO CONGRESS OPENED AT ITS NEW BUILDING WHICH WAS COMPLETED ON SCHEDULE AND UNDER COST. MRS. R. DREIFUSS, PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION TOOK PART IN THE OPENING OF CONGRESS AND DEDICATION OF THE NEW BUILDING. THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION WAS HEADED BY GENERAL JACK KELLY, JR, U.S. PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE WMO. THE MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY 630 DELEGATES FROM 170 COUNTRIES.

3. INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE OF DATA

THE WMO CONGRESS ENDORSED INTER-SESSIONAL DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WITH REGARD TO INTERPRETATION OF WMO RESOLUTION 40 ON THE INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE OF METEOROLOGICAL DATA AND PRODUCTS. CONGRESS XIII PASSED A RESOLUTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE OF HYDROLOGICAL DATA AND PRODUCTS, SIMILAR TO WMO RESOLUTION 40, WITH LITTLE DISCUSSION. THE RESOLUTION ENCOURAGES MEMBERS TO EXCHANGE HYDROLOGICAL DATA NEEDED FOR PROTECTION OF LIFE AND PROPERTY, FOR FORECASTS, AND FOR RESEARCH. EUROPEANS WERE SUCCESSFUL IN GETTING CONGRESS TO AGREE TO LOOK AT THE ISSUE OF AERONAUTICAL DATA ON THE INTERNET. IN MANY INSTANCES, THESE AERONAUTICAL DATA ARE IDENTICAL TO THOSE DATA WHICH ARE RESTRICTED UNDER RESOLUTION 40. THE ISSUE WILL BE ADDRESSED IN A EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SUBGROUP, IN WHICH GEN. KELLY IS A MEMBER.

4. ROLE AND OPERATION OF NMHS

MEMBERS DISCUSSED THE CHANGES WHICH MANY NATIONAL METEOROLOGICAL AND HYDROLOGICAL SERVICES (NMHS) ARE FACING IN LIGHT OF MOVES BY SOME GOVERNMENTS TO RECOVER COSTS. THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES INVOLVE CONTINUED GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF NMHS WHICH CANNOT BE COMPLETELY SUPPORTED BY COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES AND THE NEED FOR CONTINUED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, NOT COMPETITION, IN THE FIELDS OF METEOROLOGY AND HYDROLOGY. FOR THESE REASONS, THE CONGRESS ADOPTED ITS FIRST EVER DECLARATION WHICH ECHOED THESE ISSUES.

5. INVOLVEMENT OF PRIVATE SECTOR

FOLLOWING A NOAA WORKSHOP IN JANUARY IN DALLAS, CANADA AND THE U.S. CO-SPONSORED A PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A MECHANISM TO INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF THE MEDIA, PRIVATE SECTOR AND ACADEMIA IN THE WORK AND ACTIVITIES OF THE WMO. KEY ISSUES OF MUTUAL CONCERN INCLUDE COORDINATION OF NATIONAL WARNINGS AND FORECASTS, AND ATTRIBUTION TO SOURCES OF DATA

AND PRODUCTS BY THE MEDIA. E.C. WILL EXPLORE WAYS TO INCREASE THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN WORK OF THE WMO OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS THROUGH A WORKING GROUP. THIS INITIATIVE MET OPPOSITION BY SOME MEMBERS, NOTABLY FRANCE.

6. STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION

AFTER FOUR YEARS OF DISCUSSION, CONGRESS HAD BEFORE IT ONLY A MERGER OF TWO OF ITS EIGHT TECHNICAL COMMISSIONS, BUT AGREEMENT COULD NOT BE REACHED. CONGRESS DECIDED TO CONTINUE TO LOOK AT POSSIBLE AVENUES FOR RESTRUCTURING IN THE ORGANIZATION OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS, BUT PROSPECTS FOR SIGNIFICANT CHANGES WILL HAVE TO AWAIT ELECTION OF A NEW SECRETARY-GENERAL.

7. WORLD WEATHER WATCH

IT WAS NOTED THAT UNDER THE NEW STRUCTURE OF THE COMMISSION FOR BASIC SYSTEMS, SPECIAL EXPERT TEAMS WERE LOOKING AT Y2K ISSUES RELATED TO METEOROLOGY AND AT INCREASED USE OF INTERNET. NMHS WERE URGED TO LINK THEIR WEB PAGES WITH THE WMO HOMEPAGE. CONGRESS WAS INFORMED THE BASIC GLOBAL SURFACE OBSERVING SYSTEM IS BASICALLY STABLE BUT THE GLOBAL UPPER-AIR OBSERVING SYSTEM HAS REDUCED BY 4%. SEVERAL DELEGATIONS NOTED THE UNRELIABILITY OF THE VAISALA GPS SONDE SYSTEM WHERE UP TO 30% OF THE SOUNDINGS WERE LOST. CBS WILL LOOK INTO THE MATTER, ALONG WITH THE HIGH COST OF THE SONDES. CONGRESS ENDORSED INCREASED COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE GLOBAL OBSERVING SYSTEM FOR WEATHER AND THE ONE BEING CONSIDERED FOR CLIMATE.

8. SATELLITE ISSUES

THE U.S. PRESENTED A TALK ON ITS MOVES TOWARDS A CONVERGED POLAR ORBITING SATELLITE SYSTEM AND THE EXPECTED IMPACT ON WEATHER, WATER AND CLIMATE SERVICES. CONGRESS AGREED OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEAR PERIOD TO HOLD A MEETING OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES FROM COUNTRIES OPERATING METEOROLOGICAL SATELLITES AND SATELLITE OPERATORS TO DISCUSS POLICY ISSUES IMPACTING THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF SATELLITE INSTRUMENTATION WHICH MEETS THE NEEDS OF WMO. INDIA ANNOUNCED THE SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF IT GEOSTATIONARY INSAT 2E FROM WHICH METEOROLOGICAL DATA WILL BE SHARED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS (E.G., WITH THE U.S.). CHINA ANNOUNCED THE SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF FY-1C, ITS FIRST OPERATIONAL POLAR ORBITING SATELLITE, FROM WHICH DATA WILL BE PROVIDED FREELY TO ALL.

9. WORLD CLIMATE PROGRAM

CONGRESS AGREED ON THE FOLLOWING POINTS: (1) THE CENTRAL BRIDGING ACTIVITY BETWEEN THE RESEARCH AND SERVICE ACTIVITIES OF THE WCP IS THE CLIMATE INFORMATION AND PREDICTION SERVICES (CLIPS) PROJECT, (2) A REGIONAL CLIMATE FOCUS HAD HIGH PRIORITY, (3) THE DETERMINATION OF HOW WMO RESOLUTION 40 RELATED TO CLIMATE DATA IS STILL NOT CLEAR AND NEEDS FURTHER REVIEW, AND (4) ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALIZED REGIONAL CENTERS WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE MONITORING AND FORECASTING IS STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION. USDEL RECOMMENDED WMO RES. 40 SHOULD NOT BE APPLIED TO DATA AND PRODUCTS THAT PREDATE IT WHICH GERMANY SURPRISINGLY SUPPORTED. USDEL ALSO RECOMMENDED FURTHER DEFINITION OF REQUIREMENTS, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES OF REGIONAL CENTERS, BEFORE ESTABLISHMENT.

10. THE REPORT ON CLIMATE AGENDA ACTIVITIES WAS GIVEN BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE FOR THE CLIMATE AGENDA, DR. G. MCBEAN (CANADA). HE INDICATED THERE WAS GROWING WORLD-WIDE CONCERN ABOUT THE DECLINE IN OBSERVATIONS BEING PROVIDED TO THE CLIMATE DATA ARCHIVES AND THE NEED FOR MORE DEDICATED SUPPORT FOR THE AGENDA'S ACTIVITIES.

12. THE INCOMING DIRECTOR OF THE GLOBAL CLIMATE OBSERVING SYSTEM (GCOS), DR. A. THOMAS (USA) PAINTED A DEPRESSING PICTURE INDICATING GCOS IS AT A CRITICAL POINT ANALOGOUS TO A PATIENT IN INTENSIVE CARE. GCOS SPONSORS AND THE U.N. CLIMATE FRAMEWORK CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP) EXPECT THE FULL ATMOSPHERIC, OCEANIC AND TERRESTRIAL OBSERVATIONAL SYSTEMS TO BE IMPLEMENTED WITHOUT FURTHER PLANNING, HOWEVER RESOURCES ARE LACKING FOR STAFF AT WMO AND FUNDS FOR MEMBERS TO DEPLOY THE NECESSARY SYSTEMS TO IMPLEMENT GCOS.

13. THE CHAIR OF THE JOINT SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE (DR. L. GATES, USA) REPORTED THE WORLD CLIMATE RESEARCH PROGRAM (WCRP) IS SHIFTING ITS EMPHASIS TOWARDS REGIONAL SCALES. DR. GATES OUTLINED THE FUTURE CHALLENGES AS: (1) ASSEMBLING GLOBAL CLIMATE DATA SETS, INCLUDING PALEOCLIMATE DATA; (2) IMPROVING CLIMATE MODELS BY REMOVING SYSTEMATIC ERRORS, INCREASING RESOLUTION, AND INCORPORATING BIOGEOCHEMICAL PROCESSES; (3) SYSTEMATICALLY EXPLORING CLIMATE PREDICTABILITY ON VARIOUS TIME SCALES; AND (4) RESEARCHING ANTHROPOGENIC CLIMATE CHANGE. THE USDEL WORKED WITH THE UK AND OTHERS TO DEVELOP A PROPOSAL FOR A REVIEW OF THE WCP AND POSSIBLE REASSIGNMENT OF RESOURCES.

14. ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH AND ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

CONGRESS ENDORSED THE NEWLY FORMED WORLD WEATHER RESEARCH PROGRAM (WWRP). THE WWRP WILL PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF IMPROVED FORECASTING TECHNIQUES, WITH EMPHASIS ON HIGH IMPACT WEATHER EVENTS. WITHIN THE U.S. A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE WWRP IS THE U.S. WEATHER RESEARCH PROGRAM PRESENTLY FUNDED BY NSF, NOAA, NASA, AND DOD/ONR.

15. APPLICATIONS OF METEOROLOGY

THE PUBLIC WEATHER SERVICES PROGRAM WAS DEVELOPED TO ASSIST NMHSS IMPROVE THEIR CAPABILITY TO DELIVER HIGH QUALITY METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC. THE "GUIDE TO THE PUBLIC WEATHER SERVICES PRACTICES" WILL BE PUBLISHED LATER THIS YEAR. IN RELATION TO THE AERONAUTICAL METEOROLOGICAL PROGRAM, CONGRESS NOTED THE GLOBAL COVERAGE OF THE WAFS SATELLITE BROADCAST WAS ACHIEVED IN 1996 WITH 165 GROUND RECEIVING AND WORK STATIONS IN 120 COUNTRIES INSTALLED TO DATE. CONGRESS EXPRESSED APPRECIATION TO MEMBERS, IN PARTICULAR THE U.S. AND U.K. FOR PROVIDING OTHER MEMBERS WITH THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT TO ACCESS THE SATELLITE BROADCAST. CONGRESS ENDORSED A NEW BODY FOR OCEANOGRAPHY AND MARINE METEOROLOGY TO BE ESTABLISHED JOINTLY WITH IOC, TO REPLACE EXISTING BODIES IN BOTH ORGANIZATIONS. AS A FOLLOW-UP TO THE MEETING IN MARCH, AFTER MUCH DEBATE, CONGRESS DECIDED TO ASK COUNTRIES WHICH ARE PART OF THE TECHNICAL COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL METEOROLOGY TO ENDORSE THE ELECTION OF RAY MOTHIA (USDA) AS PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION. THE ENDORSEMENT IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BY MAIL WITHIN 3 MONTHS.

16. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

CONGRESS, NOTING THE EXPANDING NEED FOR TRAINING IN ALL NMHSS, HIGHLIGHTED THE ADVANTAGE OF DISTANCE TRAINING, ESPECIALLY VIA THE INTERNET, AND CALLED FOR A STRONGER EMPHASIS ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF THIS METHOD OF TRAINING.

17. HYDROLOGY AND WATER RESOURCES

CONGRESS RECOGNIZED THE INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ROLE OF HYDROLOGY IN THE WORK OF WMO AND ENDORSED THE RECENT FOCUS OF THE ORGANIZATION IN IMPROVING THE HYDROLOGICAL DATA BASE ON A REGIONAL BASIS. ALTHOUGH CONGRESS ENCOURAGED REGIONAL HYDROLOGICAL ADVISORS TO ATTEND THE E.C. AS ADVISERS TO MEMBERS, IT DID NOT SUPPORT THEIR FULL MEMBERSHIP ON E.C.

CONGRESS SAW MERIT IN REFLECTING HYDROLOGY IN A SUBTITLE OF THE ORGANIZATION, BUT DID NOT WISH TO CHANGE THE NAME OF WMO. CONGRESS REQUESTED THE EC TO FURTHER STUDY THIS MATTER.

18. TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM

THE RECORD OF THE PAST FOUR YEARS FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION FOR WMO SHOWED CONSIDERABLE REDUCTION FROM PREVIOUS YEARS. THE 2/3RDS DECREASE WAS MAINLY FROM TWO REASONS: A CHANGE IN FUNDING APPROACH BY MAJOR FUNDING INSTITUTIONS, AND A RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF THE SECRETARIAT TO ADJUST THEIR APPROACH TO SEEKING ASSISTANCE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE LIKELIHOOD OF IMPROVEMENT IN THESE ACTIVITIES OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS IS SLIGHT. THE U.S. HAS HAD SEVERAL RECENT SUCCESSES IN OBTAINING FUNDING FOR NMHSS AFFECTED BY HURRICANES GEORGES AND MITCH, AND WILL TAKE A MAJOR ROLE IN GETTING ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM EXTERNAL FUNDS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL METEOROLOGY.

19. REGIONAL PROGRAM

DESPITE OPPOSITION, USDEL WAS SUCCESSFUL IN GETTING THE E.C. TO CONDUCT AN ASSESSMENT OF THE FUNCTIONING AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FOUR SUB-REGIONAL OFFICES ESTABLISHED SINCE LAST CONGRESS BEFORE NEW ONES ARE ESTABLISHED. TWO NEW SUB-REGIONAL OFFICES WERE PROPOSED AND WIDELY SUPPORTED BY THE RESPECTIVE AREAS FOR THE NEWLY INDEPENDENT STATES (IN BULGARIA) AND FOR ASIA (IN PAKISTAN).

20. CONVENTION AND LEGAL QUESTIONS

CONGRESS APPROVED A LIMIT OF 3 FOUR-YEAR TERMS FOR THE POSITION OF WMO SECRETARY-GENERAL, EFFECTIVE FROM THE 14TH CONGRESS. IT AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE SIX REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS TO WMO REGION I TO VI. CONGRESS DID NOT AGREE TO INCREASING THE NUMBER OF VICE PRESIDENTS OF THE ORGANIZATION. CONGRESS OUTLINED PROCEDURES FOR MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN E.C. MEETINGS AS PART-TIME ADVISORS TO REGIONAL PRESIDENTS, BUT DID NOT APPROVE SPECIAL OBSERVER STATUS.

21. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

CONGRESS NOTED THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY WMO TO THE UNFCCC. WITH REGARD TO UNCCD THE CONGRESS NOTED THAT THE FIGHT AGAINST DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT HAD RECEIVED A HIGH PRIORITY IN WMO'S LONG TERM

PLANS THROUGH THEIR AGRICULTURE METEOROLOGY PROGRAM AND HYDROLOGICAL PROGRAM. CONGRESS EXPRESSED GRATITUDE TO GOVERNMENTS, REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION UNITS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS FOR THEIR SUPPORT TO THE IPCC IN CASH AND KIND. IPCC CHAIRMAN PERSONALLY THANKED USDEL FOR ITS USD 2.7 MILLION CONTRIBUTION TO THE IPCC WHICH WAS DEPOSITED DURING CONGRESS.

22. DR. ZILLMAN, WMO PRESIDENT, NOTED WMO NEEDS A MORE FORWARD-LOOKING AND BETTER COORDINATED APPROACH TO CLIMATE ISSUES, AND SUGGESTED THIS BE GIVEN HIGH PRIORITY BY THE E.C. HE SUGGESTED THE E.C. SHOULD CONSIDER WHETHER WMO SHOULD HOLD A 3RD WORLD CLIMATE CONFERENCE DURING THE 13TH FINANCIAL PERIOD.

23. PROGRAM AND BUDGET

THE ZERO NOMINAL GROWTH BUDGET LEVEL OF SWISSFRANCS 248.8M WAS AGREED EARLY IN THE SESSION WITH DISCUSSIONS FOCUSING ON HOW TO DISTRIBUTE A ONE-TIME ADDITIONAL SUM OF SF3.5M BETWEEN THE PROGRAMS OF THE ORGANIZATION. THE SUM WAS REALIZED IN THE TRANSITION TO NEW PREMISES. THE FOUR-YEAR BUDGET WILL BE IMPLEMENTED ON A BIENNIUM BASIS, HALF-HALF.

24. ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

PROF G.O.P. OBASI WAS APPOINTED SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR A 5TH FOUR-YEAR TERM. HE RECEIVED MORE THAN 2/3RDS OF THE FIRST BALLOT VOTES OF 154 ELIGIBLE DELEGATIONS OVER TWO OTHER CANDIDATES: DR. G. MCBEAN (CANADA) AND AMB. M. DENG (COSTA RICA). TWO DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION, DELEGATIONS WERE INVITED TO AN INFORMAL ONE-HOUR PRESENTATION BY EACH OF THE THREE CANDIDATES. THE OFFICERS FOR THE ORGANIZATION ARE PRESIDENT, DR. JOHN ZILLMAN (AUSTRALIA); 1ST VICE PRESIDENT, MR. J-P BEYSSON (FRANCE); 2ND VICE PRESIDENT, DR. A-M NOORIAN (IRAN); AND 3RD VICE PRESIDENT, CMDR. R. SONZINI (ARGENTINA). THE 36-MEMBER EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WAS ELECTED WITH MANY OF THE SAME INDIVIDUALS AS IN THE PREVIOUS FOUR YEARS. GEN. JACK KELLY WAS RE-ELECTED TO THE WMO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

25. DATE AND PLACE OF CG-XIV

THE XIVTH WORLD METEOROLOGICAL CONGRESS IS SCHEDULED FOR 5 TO 26 MAY 2003. YY

W/IA:KWESTON:VR:(301)713-0647X145:6/2/99

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SPELLCHECK--VR--PROOFREAD--VR--